

Wednesday Night Bible Study

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Queens Chapel

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Lesson 2

"God Teaches Me to Relax When I'm Stressed"

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"He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters"

Psalms 23:2

Which questions would you answer yes to:

- *Do you feel like you're always in a hurry?
- *Are you late for appointments?
- *Is your to-do list unrealistically long?
- *Has more than one person ever told you to slow down?
- *Do you feel guilty when you relax?
- *Do you have to get sick to take time off?
- *Is it hard for you to focus on the task at hand?

To give God my best requires rest

The pace of our modern society pushes us to keep going and going and going. Many people even work on their day off and those who go to church service often head home afterward only to dive right back into work(whether housework, schoolwork, or career work), trying to get all the stuff done that they didn't accomplish during the regular workweek.

On top of that, some people think God only smiles on them when they are working, praying, or doing "spiritual" activities. No wonder we're exhausted!

Most of us are maxed out. We're tapped out. But that's not the way of the Good Shepherd.

They spit out their food half-chewed,
unable to relax and enjoy anything they've worked for.

Job 20:18 (The Message)

The fact is that God, in His goodness, created rest because He considers it as important as work. A good shepherd makes sure his sheep gets enough rest to stay healthy.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters"

Psalms 23:2

If we don't lie down, God will make us lie down. Sometimes the only way God can get us to look up is to lay us flat on our backs. God will do that because He cares about our physical, emotional, mental, relational, and spiritual health.

This day will always serve as a reminder,
both to me and to the Israelites, that
I made the heavens and the earth in six days,
then on the seventh day, I rested and relaxed.

Exodus 31:17 (CEV)

To give God my best requires rest

When Jesus was on earth, He rested regularly. He had several advances and retreats in His three-and-a-half-year ministry. God actually smiles on us when we rest.

So why do we tend to overwork and not get enough rest? Let's look at some reasons:

1. Misplaced identity: basing your worth on your work

Many people confuse their net worth with their self-worth, their value with their valuables.

Only someone too stupid to find his way home
would wear himself out with work.

Ecclesiastes 10:15 (GNT)

Share with your neighbor:

Has God ever had to make you lie down for your own health's sake because you wouldn't slow down on your own? What happened? What did God teach you?

Why do we tend to overwork and not get enough rest?

2. Materialism: Always wanting more.

The desire to acquire pushes us to buy something we really can't afford. So, we get overextended financially, and then we have to constantly hustle to make ends meet—and soon your relationships start to deteriorate.

Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich.

Be wise enough to know when to quit.

Proverbs 23:4 (NLT)

Don't spend all your life trying to get something you could lose so quickly. Too often we spend the first half of our lives sacrificing our health and overworking just to get wealth. Then we spend the second half of our lives sacrificing our wealth in order to restore our health

Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

Luke 12:15 (NIV)

3. Envy: wanting to be like other people

Solomon recognized the problem of envy thousands of years ago. When we feel inferior, we get envious. Envy can cause us to obsess over changing our circumstances. We think the answer is obtaining more money, better looks, more success, or more things, so we become consumed with acquiring more. The problem is that if you're motivated by envy, you're going to burn out because there's always a next level to get to.

Then I realized that we work and do wonderful things just because we are jealous of others. This makes no more sense than chasing the wind.^[a]

Ecclesiastes 4:4 (CEV)

4. Misplaced values: achievement over relationships

Everybody can be tempted to put their accomplishments above everything else—including relationships

For example, some people don't have friends or family. But they are never satisfied with what they own, and they never stop working to get more. They should ask themselves, "Why am I always working to have more? Who will get what I leave behind?" What a senseless and miserable life!

Ecclesiastes 4:8-9 (CEV)

God did not put us on earth to mark items off our to-do list. He put us here to learn how to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.

36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Matthew 22:36-39 (ESV)

5. Insecurity: Fearing we won't have enough

It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones.

Psalms 127:2 (NLT)

Fear of not having enough physically or materially can lead you to give up your spiritual depth for temporary gratification. But it won't last. Security in anything that can be taken from you is not real security.

We work to feed our appetites;
Meanwhile our souls go hungry.

Ecclesiastes 6:7 (The Message)

The difference between being blessed
and being stressed is often rest

While God is growing your business, He's growing you. While God is growing your children, He's growing you. While God is growing your career, He's growing you. For you to grow, we have to learn to feast on God's goodness.

"He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters"

Psalms 23:2

Let's take a few minutes to meditate on Psalms 23:2. The images in this verse represent rest and refreshment.

- Take a few minutes to meditate on this verse now.
- First, read it slowly, maybe out loud a few times.
- Second, reflect on the truth of this text
- Third, respond to what God is saying to you
- Fourth, rest in the words of this verse

What I'm trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with *getting*, so you can respond to God's *giving*.

Matthew 6:31 (The Message)

So how in the world do you live a rest-filled or restful life?

You trust your faithful shepherd and become aware of the five (5) antidotes to overwork

Five Antidotes to overwork:

1. *Remember your value to God*

This is the exact opposite of basing your worth on your work, your career, or your full-time role. This may require a major change on your part, in your thinking, especially if the little voice in your head says "You've got to do more, You got to prove you matter"

We don't have to prove our worth. God says that you are already valuable to Him. In fact, you'll never be more valuable to God than you are now. Your value is rooted in these three truths:

- Your Heavenly Father took the time and created you
- Jesus Died on the cross for you
- The Holy Spirit lives in you

It's not what I do that gives me worth but to whom I belong

God decided to give us life through the word of truth so we might be the most important of all the things he made.

James 1:18 (NCV)

We're so valuable to God that our name is tattooed on the person of God.

15 "Can a woman forget her nursing baby or lack compassion for a child of her womb? Even if these forget, I will not forget you.

16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands. Your walls are continually before Me.

Isaiah 49:15-16 (TLB)

2. Enjoy what you already have

Contentment does not come naturally to human beings. By nature, we are restless sheep. Yet, we can learn contentment. Learning contentment means we stop incessantly striving for more.

12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:12-13 (NIV)

Nobody ever asks for things in the final moments of their life. They always ask for people, because eventually, everybody learns that life is all about relationships.

If we learn this sooner, it will relieve a lot of stress. Life is not about achievements and it's not about accomplishments; it's about relationships

Yet a very little food eaten in peace is better than twice as much earned from overwork and chasing the wind.

Ecclesiastes 4:6 (CEV)

3. Limit your work to six days a week

Did you know that your heart actually beats differently every seven days? We're biologically wired for a day of rest.

Rest and recreation are so important that God included them in the 10 Commandments.

[You shall have no other gods before Me.](#)

[You shall make no idols.](#)

[You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.](#)

[Keep the Sabbath day holy.](#)

[Honor your father and your mother.](#)

[You shall not murder.](#)

[You shall not commit adultery.](#)

[You shall not steal.](#)

[You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.](#)

[You shall not covet.](#)

The day you take off each week is called your "Sabbath" which means "Day of rest"

Work six days a week, but do no work on the seventh day, so that your slaves and the foreigners who work for you and even your animals can rest.

Exodus 23:12 GNT

9 Work and get everything done during six days each week,

10 but the seventh day is a day of rest to honor the Lord your God. On that day no one may do any work: not you, your son or daughter, your male or female slaves, your animals, or the foreigners living in your cities.

Exodus 20:9-10 (NCV)

God didn't make the sabbath for His benefit. He made it for ours

The Sabbath was made to benefit man
Mark 2:27 (TLB)

Therefore, when we ignore God's commandment to rest, we're hurting ourselves. It doesn't matter what day of the week you take your Sabbath.

Those who are entrepreneurs, self-employed, or who work remotely, if you don't schedule it, you'll never take a break. You scheduled everything else, so schedule your Sabbath. Make it the same day every week. Don't call it your day off because if you call it your day off, you'll tend to try to get a few things done. Start calling it your Sabbath

What do you do on the Sabbath?

- *Rest your body.* In the French Revolution they abolished Sunday as a day of rest. They had to later restore it because the health of the nation had collapsed. You might say to yourself "but I feel guilty when I relax." Well, Jesus didn't. He followed the Sabbath
- *Recharge your emotions.* You can recharge your emotions through quietness, solitude, or recreation that rejuvenates you, as long as it's not competitive.
- *Refocus your spirit.* Worship—both group worship and time alone with God—puts your life into perspective

4. *Adjust your values.*

To reduce the busyness in your life, look closely at what's important to you. Every time you make a decision, you're relying on your values to tell you what to do. Unfortunately, some of the values you operate by are counterproductive to rest and to live in God's goodness.

You see, many of the unconscious values you live by may be ones you didn't choose; they were imposed on you by parents, peers, and

culture. Just like the set of the sail determines the direction of a sailboat, your values chart the course for your life.

Peace of mind makes the body healthy, but jealousy is like a cancer.

Proverbs 14:30 (GNT)

5. Exchange your restlessness for God's peace

Did you know that sheep don't like to lie down? They just don't. Often, we don't either. However, if we don't slow down, God will make us lie down. God's way is not only the right way but it's the only way.

God wants us to give up our tendency to roam, to wander, or to veer off course. Restlessness leads to exhaustion—physical fatigue, emotional fatigue, or spiritual fatigue. We need more than sleep to cure these last two.

In vain you rise up early and stay up late, eating the bread of toil—
for He provides for His beloved ones even in their sleep.

Psalms 127:2 (TLB)

Here's an easy acrostic to help us understand why it's vital to learn to RELAX

R-remember my value to God

E=joy what I already have

L-imit my work to six days a week

A-djust my values

X-change my restlessness for God's peace